

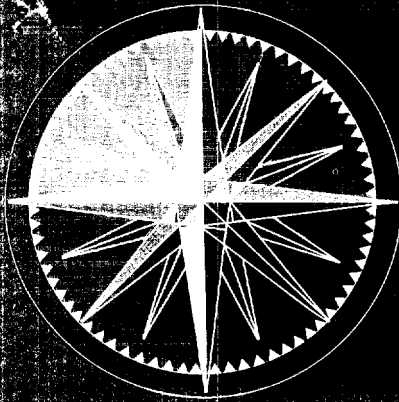
**SECRET**

Release 2006/12/27 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005500040003-7

4 November 1966

OCI No. 0314/66B

Copy No. 45



# CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SPECIAL REPORT

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: FACTORS IN POLITICS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

NO FOREIGN DISSEM

MORI/CDF

**SECRET**

GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and declassification

This Special Report is a supplement to the current intelligence weekly issued on this date by the Office of Current Intelligence. Special Reports are published separately in order to give the subject more comprehensive treatment than is possible in that publication. Special Reports are produced by the Office of Current Intelligence, Office of Research and Reports or the Directorate of Science and Technology.

THIS MATERIAL CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE LAWS, TITLE 18, USC, SECTIONS 793 AND 794, THE TRANSMISSION OR REVELATION OF WHICH IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.

#### DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

This document MUST NOT BE RELEASED TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS. If marked with specific dissemination controls in accordance with the provisions of DCID 1/7, the document must be handled within the framework of the limitation so imposed.

Special Reports are supplements to the Current Intelligence Weeklies issued by the Office of Current Intelligence. The Special Reports are published separately to permit more comprehensive treatment of a subject. They are prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence, the Office of Research and Reports, or the Directorate of Science and Technology. Special Reports are coordinated as appropriate among the Directorates of CIA but, except for the normal substantive exchange with other agencies at the working level, have not been coordinated outside CIA unless specifically indicated.

**SECRET****TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: FACTORS IN POLITICS**

Since it attained independence in 1962, the two-island state of Trinidad and Tobago has enjoyed a remarkable degree of political stability. Under Prime Minister Eric Williams the country remains a parliamentary democracy with a moderate and relatively honest and well-run government.

Williams is a highly intelligent, articulate, and industrious man, if sometimes volatile and irascible. He dominates both the country and his party, the People's National Movement (PNM). Although Trinidad's relations with the United States are amicable, Williams has often been highly critical of US policies, particularly those relating to foreign assistance.

Elections are to be held on 7 November. Campaigning has daily grown more heated and, while there has been no major election-connected violence to date, minor incidents are anticipated. The voters are expected to keep Williams and his predominantly Negro PNM in power for another five years with a solid majority of the 36 seats in the lower house. However, there are prevailing factors--a new pro-Marxist dimension in the opposition camp, a high unemployment rate, and a changing racial structure--which will test Williams' continued dominance and personal popularity over the next five years.

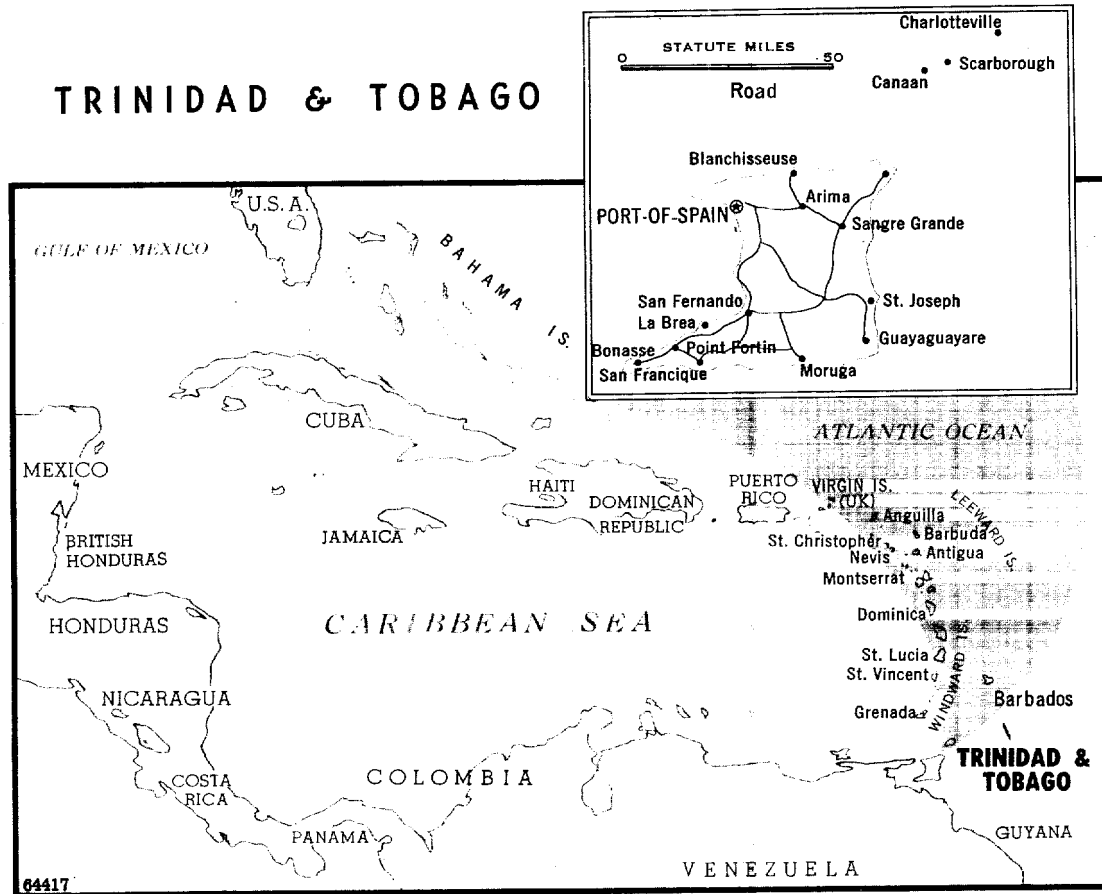
Parties and Leaders

The moderate PNM is running on the record of what has been accomplished in the ten years since it came to power. It has pointed with pride to Trinidad's growing international prestige, and the visits of foreign dignitaries--such as the Queen of England and the Emperor of Ethiopia earlier this year--have given the average Trinidadian some sense of participation in this achievement. While the PNM's 1966 campaign does not have the emo-

tional preindependence issues which helped it win in 1961, it does have a well-organized machine which the government compliments as far as is possible. Williams speaks almost daily to one group or another throughout Trinidad, and he continues to attract good crowds. He no longer has the popular adulation he once enjoyed, but the majority apparently feel there is no alternative to him at present.

The opposition is fragmented and ineffectual. Despite

**SECRET**



**SECRET**

dissatisfaction with the PNM among many Trinidadians, the disorganized opposition has been unable to take full advantage of controversial issues. The major opposition group, the largely East Indian Democratic Labor Party (DLP), has been damaged by weak leadership and the defection of several prominent members. Party leader Dr. Rudranath Capildeo spends more of his time teaching in London than in running the DLP. He has been in Trinidad since July to activate the party's campaign and try to put party affairs in order. The DLP advocates a mild form of "Scandinavian socialism," but has not put forth a clear platform in the current campaign. Capildeo's personal appeal to many of Trinidad's East Indians and the proportion of East Indian voters in certain constituencies could give the DLP eight seats, but the party poses no threat to the ruling PNM.

Other contenders for government leadership in the coming election include former DLP member Peter Farquhar, who now heads the Liberal Party, and strong man Bhadase Sagan Maraj, head of the country's leading Hindu organization and the All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factory Workers' Union, who recently resurrected his People's Democratic Party (PDP). Farquhar has been campaigning on a conservative platform, but his rather intellectual approach holds little popular appeal. There is still some uncertainty as to whether Maraj will actually run, although he has announced his candidacy.



Prime Minister—Trinidad & Tobago

84416

A rather unsavory character--guntoter and gambler--he has substantial financial backing. His resources, financial and otherwise, should enable the PDP to obtain a seat in the lower house, if he decides it is to his advantage to run.

Any challenge to the ruling PNM would almost certainly have to come from a grouping which can secure the support of the East Indian sugar workers and the predominantly African oil workers. Efforts in this direction are being made by the recently created leftist Workers' and Farmers' Party (WFP) led by Stephen Maharaj.

**SECRET**

**SECRET**

The WFP has seized upon a recent Industrial Court decision to stir up discontent among Trinidad's sugar workers in the hope of securing their votes. The decision ordered a ten-percent wage hike for sugar workers, but also approved a mechanization plan and permitted the nation's largest sugar employer to cut back his work force through attrition. The settlement was doubly unpalatable to sugar workers in light of the more favorable terms the court had granted to the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union (OWTU). At daily mass meetings and demonstrations being conducted throughout the sugar belt, WFP leaders have been emphasizing the "poor suffering oppressed masses of sugar workers" and promising that, if given power, the WFP intends to parcel out the vast sugar estates owned by foreign companies in 250-acre plots to individual farmers.

The party has been aided in its campaign by pro-Communist George Weekes, head of the powerful OWTU, and other local leftists. To date, however, the WFP has not been able to achieve any large-scale collaboration between Weekes' predominantly African oil workers and the East Indian sugar workers, most of whom respond to PDP leader Maraj.

Local political observers do not give the WFP a chance of winning more than one or two seats at the most, but they are watching closely to see how the voters react to the new pro-

Marxist dimension to their politics.

Williams' administration has been quick to display its sensitivity to the WFP efforts, and has been hitting hard on the dangers of Communism. It hopes it can squarely pin the Communist label on the WFP and the OWTU, thus reducing the leftists' chances of securing additional popular backing in either the labor or political field. Despite the WFP's desire not to scare off any potential voters, its platform does reflect the Marxist inclinations of its leaders, and the party has been hard put to fend off the PNM attack.

Potential Racial Tensions

Although Trinidad's two major parties, the PNM and the DLP, have polarized on ethnic lines, the division is not rigid. Racial tensions, dormant for some five years, are never far below the surface however. There was a serious danger of violence before the election in 1961, but in 1964 the major parties agreed to a code of ethics for future elections which supposedly ruled out race as an issue.

Roughly 43 percent of the nation's population are Africans, most of whom reside in the urban areas, and 36 percent are East Indians, who chiefly inhabit the rural areas. The remainder are mixed and there are small minorities of Europeans, Chinese, Lebanese, and others. The East Indians are multiplying faster than

**SECRET**

**SECRET**

the Africans and should outvote them by about 1970. Racial tensions could revive if the Africans should prove unwilling to surrender their short-lived political supremacy.

The Economy

A relatively wealthy nation, Trinidad is well ahead of most Latin American countries and other West Indian islands economically. Its 1965 per capita GNP of US \$614 (at 1962 prices) was double the average for Latin America. Rapid population growth, however, is probably causing a slight decrease in real per capita income. The nation's wealth is based on oil and sugar, the latter industry sustained mainly by the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement.

Petroleum, however, which was the principal engine of growth in the preceding decade, has leveled off since 1962. Lower levels of investment in the domestic crude oil industry and reduced world prices for sugar and cocoa, account for a slow rate of economic growth in recent years. (GNP in real terms increased about 2.7 percent annually in the period 1963-1965.)

Both the oil and sugar industries, to remain competitive, are introducing labor-saving techniques. Yet the nation's major problem is heavy unemployment caused by a population growth of three percent per year. Of a total labor force of 350,000 an estimated 14 percent are un-

employed. The government is attempting to combat unemployment by adopting policies designed to attract more industrial capital and to broaden the economic base.

In tourism, which follows petroleum, sugar, and chemical fertilizers as a foreign exchange earner, the heretofore gradual rise of earnings may quicken as a result of additional promotional efforts by the Hilton hotel interests.

Trinidad's trade balance has become increasingly unfavorable. The island showed a trade deficit of \$68 million in 1965, compared with a deficit of \$21 million in 1964. This was mainly due to a large rise in the volume of crude oil imports as well as increased imports of capital equipment. Food imports for the year reached a record high of \$52 million, despite enlarged agricultural output. Unless serious corrective measures are taken the country will before long find itself in a disastrous balance-of-payments crisis.

Government efforts to stimulate agricultural development, in a country where the great majority of food continues to be imported, are beginning to show results in production of poultry, eggs, and milk. Also, the country is expected to meet domestic pork requirements by the end of 1967, and substantial gains in beef and veal are expected during the next 10 to 15 years.

**SECRET**

## SECRET

While trying to finance its own development, Trinidad is now also interested in joining the Organization of American States (OAS) and participating in the Alliance for Progress. OAS membership had seemed a dormant issue in 1965, but Prime Minister Williams has since been publicly emphasizing the need for closer economic and social ties between Trinidad and Latin America. The government is also in favor of the formation of a Caribbean Common Market.

### Labor-Management Relations

Trinidad's formerly chaotic labor situation was reversed by the passage in March 1965 of the Industrial Stabilization Act (ISA). The ISA gave the government broad powers to control strikes and to review, challenge, and otherwise adjust the terms (including wages) of any collective bargaining agreement. The disruptive labor relations situation has since changed to one of industrial stability. Although challenges to the constitutionality of the law by the powerful Oilfield Workers' Trade Union have been carried upward through the courts, the fact that decisions by the ISA-created Industrial Court have been largely pro-labor has tempered labor's original opposition to the law and soured the Trinidadian business community's original support.

While the enactment of the ISA has prevented strikes and improved economic prospects, the possibility of a deterioration leading to serious discontent re-

mains. There is also the fear that should a nondemocratic administration ever gain control in Trinidad, the ISA will be a ready instrument for absolute control of the country's economic life.

### Subversion and Internal Security

Trinidad has a small nucleus of Communist sympathizers whose activities have mostly been uncoordinated, and whose influence in the trade unions, notably the oil industry, has been effectively curbed by the government. Although the Workers' and Farmers' Party has rallied leftist radical elements to its side, it has not as yet developed a firm political base.

External sources of Communist influence are also limited. Communist countries are not represented in Trinidad. In 1965, Prime Minister Williams accepted an invitation to visit Moscow although he was well aware that the price might be the establishment of diplomatic relations or landing rights for Soviet airlines. Williams subsequently canceled his trip and for the present at least has no plans to visit Russia or to permit the establishment of a diplomatic mission from any of the Communist countries.

Trinidad's first official contact with Cuba came in January 1966, when George Weekes, the president of the OWTU, and George Bowrin, editor of the OWTU's newspaper Vanguard, attended the Tri-Continent Conference in Havana. Later in the year Learie Collymore, secretary of a branch

## SECRET



**SECRET**

of the OWTU, was delegated by Weeks to attend the May Day celebrations in Havana. Collymore spent four weeks in Cuba.

Since these contacts with Cuba, in addition to the appearance of increased quantities of subversive literature, there has been a change of emphasis in the Vanguard, and Weeks has publicly stated that the people of Trinidad and Tobago were "in need of assistance as promised by the Communist-sponsored Tri-Continent Congress...in order to break out from imperialist domination."

With the exception of the Weekes-Bowrin group, however, the labor movement in Trinidad is basically conservative, and there are reports that the rank and file of the OWTU is becoming increasingly disenchanted with Weekes' political stand. While the possible value of these first contacts with Havana cannot be underestimated, they do not appear to have had any major impact or effect to date.

#### Security Forces

The country's defense force consists of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment and Coast Guard. The regiment is composed of one

regular infantry battalion (strength 550) and one reserve volunteer company with another reserve company under formation. All the ranks are predominantly African and although there has been no tendency toward political involvement there is little doubt that most of its members are supporters of Williams. The regiment is capable of maintaining internal security and performing its assigned nonmilitary and ceremonial tasks. The capability to deter aggression, however, is very limited. The small Coast Guard was organized with a nucleus of about 40 men from the former Harbor Defense of the Police Department. It is commanded by a white Trinidadian officer. Its craft consist of four motor launches inherited from the police unit and two new patrol boats.

The National Police Force, consisting of approximately 2,400, is commanded by a white Trinidadian commissioner. Like the armed forces it is predominantly African in composition, and appears loyal to the government. Although the force is reasonably well equipped to maintain law and order, a high crime rate gives no cause for complacency. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

\* \* \*

**SECRET**

***SECRET***

***SECRET***